

Appl. No. : 10/701,213
Filed : November 4, 2003

REMARKS

By way of summary, Claims 1–21 were pending in this application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending application in view of the following comments.

103(a) Claim Rejections

Claims 1–3 and 6–19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takashi (JP 09-170039) in view of Fukuda (JP 10-188894), and Claims 4, 5, 20, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takashi in view of Fukuda and in further view of Takayama (6,267,700). Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 16 and respectfully submits that the amended claims are not rendered obvious by the cited references, as explained below.

Independent Claims 1 and 16

Takashi, entitled, “Cooling Structure of Belt Chamber of Vehicle for Off-Road Travel,” is directed to a cooling structure that is designed to cool the V-belt transmission chamber by providing an air inlet and an air outlet, by which air is permitted to flow through and cool the chamber. However, Takashi fails to teach or suggest all the limitations recited in independent Claims 1 and 16. For example, as illustrated in Drawings 13 and 14 of Takashi, the air that enters the transmission chamber is not directed “along the drive belt,” as recited in Claim 1 and does not guide “a flow of cooling air along at least a portion of the drive belt,” as recited in Claim 16. The air inlet 51a introduces air into the chamber, but the air is not directed or guided as recited in Claims 1 and 16.

Fukuda discloses a crankcase cover of an engine that is intended to cover a V-belt crank case. While the teachings of Fukuda have been combined with those of Takashi, the two references, alone or in combination fail to teach or suggest all the limitations of independent Claims 1 and 16. For example, Fukuda fails to teach or suggest the same limitations discussed above with respect to Takashi. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1 and 16 are not rendered obvious by the combined teachings of Takashi and Fukuda, and

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withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of Claims 1 and 16 based on the combined teachings of Takashi and Fukuda is respectfully requested.

Takayama discloses a cooling system for a vehicle power unit that utilizes a cooling fan to direct air into the V-belt chamber. Takayama also fails to teach or suggest the limitations recited in independent Claims 1 and 16. For example, once the air is in the chamber, it exits in one of two ways. The first is through a downward-facing outlet 29, and the second is through a top outlet 27. When air flow exits through the first outlet 29, the air follows baffles that direct the air flow away from the V-belt, and the air is never directed “along the drive belt” and the baffles do not guide “a flow of cooling air along at least a portion of the drive belt,” as recited above in Claims 1 and 16. When the flow of air exists the second way, the air flow is also not directed “along the drive belt,” and the baffles do not guide “a flow of cooling air along at least a portion of the drive belt.” As stated in the specification, “since the air branched into the second air flow path R2 moves along the return path (the upper portion) of V-belt 45 moving from the rear to the front, the air can smoothly flow *without being impeded by V-belt 45.*” Col. 5:38–41. Accordingly, Takayama teaches away from directing the flow of air “along the drive belt” and guiding “a flow of cooling air along at least a portion of the drive belt” by teaching that the air should not be impeded by the V-belt. Applicant respectfully submits that Takayama also fails to teach or suggest the limitations that are recited in Claims 1 and 16 and that these claims are not rendered obvious by the teachings of the cited references, alone or in combination. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of Claims 1 and 16 based on the cited references.

Dependent Claims 2–15 and 17–21

Claims 2–15 and 17–21 depend from Claims 1 and 16, respectively, and Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable for the same reasons set forth above with respect to Claims 1 and 16 in addition to the independently patentable subject matter recited in each of the dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the obviousness rejections of Claims 2–15 and 17–21 be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested. Applicant has made a good faith effort to respond to the outstanding Office Action. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact Applicant's attorney, at the telephone number below, to resolve any such issues promptly.

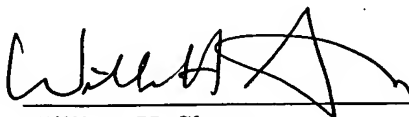
Any remarks in support of patentability of one claim should not be imputed to any other claim, even if similar terminology is used. Any remarks referring to only a portion of a claim should not be understood to base patentability on solely that portion; rather, patentability must rest on each claim taken as a whole. Applicant has not presented arguments concerning whether the applied references can be properly combined in view of the clearly missing elements noted above, and Applicant reserves the right to later contest whether a proper motivation and suggestion exists to combine these references. Additionally, Applicant respectfully traverses each of the Examiner's rejections and each of the Examiner's assertions regarding what the prior art shows or teaches, even if not expressly discussed herein.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 23, 2006

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APPENDIX

Appl. No. : **10/701,213**
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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Corrected drawing sheets are being provided herewith for Figures 1–11 in response to the objection to the drawings. Each sheet includes the designation “Replacement Sheet.”